PART 1: THE SANTA LIST AND THE BIG SHOT PLAN

December finally arrived, and TreeMoo was ready. She carefully wrote out her Santa list, putting "Half-Life for the PS2" right at the very top in big, bold letters. If this plan worked, she wouldn't have to sneak downstairs at 3 AM anymore, and she wouldn't have to accidentally blame Cat&Cat. It was foolproof.

While waiting for Christmas, TreeMoo spent her days on Colors Live, painting a massive, highly-detailed portrait of her ultimate crush, Gordon Freeman. Every time she got nervous about her parents finding out about her obsession, she would whisper her favorite Spamton quote to herself: *"Now's your chance to be a Big Shot!"* It gave her the determination she needed.

She couldn't wait to finally play a *Half-Life* game for the first time. She just hoped Santa could find a working PlayStation 2 disc in time for Christmas morning!

PART 2: THE VISITING FRIENDS

As December ticked away, TreeMoo hung out with her neighborhood friends to pass the time. They were all hanging out in the living room while TreeMoo showed them her latest artwork on her Switch.

Suddenly, a boy burst through the front door wearing a massive, bright red winter coat. He looked completely out of breath.

TreeMoo jumped back in surprise. "Whoa! Are you okay? You look like you just escaped a volcano!"

The boy stopped, dusted off his sleeves, and gave a proud, confident thumbs-up.

"Don't worry, everyone!" he announced loudly. **"I'm Levi, and**

I'm not on fire!"
Everyone in the room stared for a second before bursting into laughter. Levi took a bow, completely pleased with his grand entrance.
With her friends around to keep her distracted, the wait for Christmas didn't seem so long after all.
PART 3: THE MILK-SOAKED PLUSHIE
Before anyone could even recover from Levi's grand entrance, the front door clicked open again. In walked BIGSHOTGAMIG1997, holding something at arm's length with a look of pure confusion on his face.
He held up a heavy, dripping wet object. It was a Spamton plushie, completely drenched and smelling strongly of dairy.
"Why is this Spamton plushie covered in milk?"
BIGSHOTGAMIG1997 asked, staring at it blankly.
He looked over at TreeMoo, knowing how much she loved *Deltarune*. He quickly shook his head to reassure her.
"TreeMoo, this is someone else who did this to their Spamton plushie, it's not you."
Levi peered over, completely baffled. "Is the plushie... on fire?"
"No, Levi, it's just soggy," BIGSHOTGAMIG1997 sighed, trying to find a paper towel.
TreeMoo couldn't help but laugh. Between a friend who wasn't on fire and a milk-soaked secret salesman, this was turning out to be the weirdest December ever.
PART 4: THE STREAMERS ARRIVE
Just as BIGSHOTGAMIG1997 found a towel for the soggy Spamton, a sudden, bright digital glitch flashed in the corner of TreeMoo's bedroom. Out of thin air, WayneradioTV and Baaulp materialized right next to her desk, looking exactly

like they just stepped out of a live stream.
Levi's eyes went wide. He pointed a finger at the two sudden guests and turned to TreeMoo with a huge grin.
"TreeMoo! when we played Colors Live a few weeks ago, you told me to draw Wayne and Baaulp!" Levi shouted, totally amazed that his drawings had seemingly come to life.
Wayne adjusted his headset, looking around the room. "Uh, where are we? Is this the test chamber?"
Baaulp looked down at the floor, completely ignoring Wayne. "Hey, why is there a milk-soaked Spamton over there?"
TreeMoo stood in the middle of her room, completely shocked but absolutely thrilled. Her favorite internet creators were standing right in front of her, and her Christmas wish hadn't even happened yet!
PART 5: THE ROOM CONSOLE
"Wait, we don't need to search the house," TreeMoo laughed, pointing over to her desk entertainment setup. "My PS2 is right here in my room!"
Wayne walked over, leaning down to inspect the sleek, black console. "Oh man, a real PlayStation 2. Classic hardware. Excellent for running physics simulations... or getting trapped in a virtual landscape by a security guard named Benry."
Baaulp tapped the empty disc tray. "Great, so the console is ready. But we still don't have *Half-Life*. Unless..." He looked over at the milky Spamton BIGSHOTGAMIG1997 was holding. "Does the soggy salesman have it?"
Levi pumped his fists in the air. "Well, I'm still not on fire, and that console is ready to go! We just need Christmas morning to get here so Santa can drop the disc right into that tray!"

PART 6: THE ALIEN ARRIVAL

Before Wayne could answer Baaulp about the soggy Spamton, the window blinds started shaking wildly. A bright green light flashed from outside, and the window slid open with a dramatic *swoosh*.

A figure leaped through the window, striking an epic superhero pose right in the middle of the bedroom floor.

"IT'S ME! KYLE THE ALIEN!" he shouted at the top of his lungs, his arms raised high.

Levi cheered, BIGSHOTGAMIG1997 almost dropped the milk-soaked plushie in surprise, and Wayne looked completely unfazed. "Oh, neat. An alien. Did you bring any passport snacks?"

"No," Kyle the Alien replied, dusting off his cosmic jacket. "But I heard there was a PS2 in here that needs a *Half-Life* disc, and I didn't want to miss the big moment!"

TreeMoo looked around her bedroom at her real-life friends, her favorite internet streamers, and a very damp *Deltarune* plush. Her room was completely chaotic, but she had never felt more ready for Christmas.

PART 7: CHRISTMAS MORNING AND THE BIG REVEAL

The wait was finally over. The sun rose on Christmas morning, casting a warm glow over TreeMoo's bedroom. Right under the tree sat a perfectly wrapped, rectangular gift. TreeMoo tore off the paper, and her eyes lit up—it was exactly what she had asked Santa for: *Half-Life for the PS2!*

Just as she was about to slide the disc into her console, her dad walked into the room, holding a mug of coffee. He looked at the game cover, then down at TreeMoo, raising an eyebrow.

"TreeMoo, why did you ask for a violent game?" DadMoo asked, looking a bit concerned.
Before TreeMoo could even answer, her friends stepped forward in perfect unison. Levi, Kyle the Alien, and BIGSHOTGAMIG1997 stood shoulder-to-shoulder.
"TreeMoo is mature! she can handle it!" her friends shouted proudly, totally backing her up.
TreeMoo smiled at her friends, pumped her fist in the air, and looked right at her dad. **"YEAH! I SAW SOME GAMEPLAY OF IT ON YOUTUBE AND I REALLY WANTED THE GAME!"**
DadMoo stared at the energetic squad for a second, then broke into a warm smile. He remembered how much he loved playing the game when it first came out. "Alright, alright," he laughed. "Show me what you've got, Big Shot. Let's see you boot it up!"
PART 8: THE CO-OP DISCOVERY
The PlayStation 2 logo chimed on the TV screen, and the main menu faded into view. TreeMoo’s eyes scanned the options, and her jaw dropped when she spotted a specific game mode. She spun around to face the entire room, her face lighting up with excitement.
"GUYS! THERE'S A CO-OP MODE IN HALF-LIFE FOR THE PS2! WHO WANTS TO PLAY IT WITH ME?" TreeMoo shouted, holding up the second controller.
Everyone in the room instantly leaned forward.
"Ooh, pick me!" Levi yelled, waving his hands. "As long as my character isn't on fire, I'm ready to fight some aliens!"
Kyle the Alien crossed his arms confidently. "An alien-fighting game? You *have* to choose me. I have actual cosmic combat experience!"

BIGSHOTGAMIG1997 looked up from trying to squeeze milk out of the Spamton plushie. "If you pick me, I promise to be a total Big Shot in combat."
Even Wayne and Baaulp were nodding in approval from the corner of the room. It was the ultimate gaming setup, but TreeMoo only had one extra controller. She had a tough choice to make!
PART 9: PLAYER 2 ACTIVATED
TreeMoo looked at the row of eager faces, but her choice was already clear. She smiled warmly and handed the second controller directly to BIGSHOTGAMIG1997.
"I'm choosing you," TreeMoo said. "After all, you were the very first friend I ever made on Colors Live. It only makes sense that we tackle Black Mesa together!"
BIGSHOTGAMIG1997 looked genuinely honored. He set the soggy Spamton plushie safely on the desk, gripped the controller, and gave a confident nod. "You won't regret it, TreeMoo. Let's show this game what a couple of Colors Live veterans can do."
Levi cheered from the bed, "Go get 'em! I'll be the cheering section, completely fire-free!"
Kyle the Alien nodded in respect. "A logical, sentimental choice. Proceed to the hazard course!"
TreeMoo selected the co-op campaign, *Half-Life: Decay*. The screen split in two, loading up Dr. Gina Cross and Dr. Colette Green in their high-tech hazard suits. With her first online best friend right by her side in split-screen, TreeMoo pressed start, ready to face the science facility chaos together.
PART 10: THE PHYSICIST IN THE LIVING ROOM
Just as TreeMoo and BIGSHOTGAMIG1997 were completing

the very first puzzle in *Half-Life: Decay*, the front door clicked open once again. Heavy, metallic footsteps echoed down the hallway, getting louder and louder until a tall figure stepped right into the bedroom doorway.

He was wearing a massive, orange and grey HEV hazard suit, thick-rimmed glasses, and a neat goatee. He carried a heavy iron crowbar in one hand, but he didn't say a single word.

At first, everyone blinked in confusion, staring at the strange visitor. **"Who is that?"** Levi asked, squinting.

But then, as the man turned around to face the light, TreeMoo's eyes went completely wide. She jumped right off her chair, dropping her controller onto the carpet.

"GORDON FREEMAN! HOW DID YOU GET INTO OUR HOUSE? YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE IN THE GAME! AND HOW DO YOU KNOW WHERE WE LIVE?" TreeMoo shouted, her mind completely blown.

Gordon Freeman didn't speak—true to his character, he just stared back silently, adjusting his glasses.

Wayne gasped from the corner. "Oh no, the space-time continuum is completely broken. He tracked the PS2 signal!"

Baaulp shrugged. "Maybe he just wanted to play co-op too."

PART 11: THE SILENT SCIENTIST

The room was completely dead silent. Gordon Freeman stood in the doorway, towering in his orange HEV suit, just staring at the group of friends without making a single sound. He didn't even blink.

The awkward silence grew longer and longer until Levi finally couldn't take it anymore. He threw his hands in the air and stepped forward.

"USE YOUR WORDS! SAY SOMETHING!" Levi shouted at the

top of his lungs, completely exasperated by the quiet scientist.
Gordon Freeman slowly turned his head to look at Levi. He adjusted his glasses, gripped his crowbar a little tighter, and simply shrugged his shoulders.
BIGSHOTGAMIG1997 nudged Levi. "Dude, I don't think he *has* voice lines. He’s a silent protagonist!"
"But he's in a real house now!" Levi argued, waving his arms. "At least give us a 'hello' or something!"
TreeMoo looked from Levi back to Gordon, her heart racing. Her ultimate gaming crush was standing right in front of her, and even though he wasn't talking, his presence meant that their PlayStation 2 co-op session was about to get a whole lot crazier.
PART 12: THE PLUSHIE ATTACK
Levi wasn't the only one getting frustrated by the quiet scientist. Kyle the Alien stepped up right next to him, his green alien energy practically buzzing with impatience.
"SAY SOMETHING GORDON FREEMAN!" Kyle the Alien shouted, completely fed up with the silence.
Before anyone could stop him, Kyle snatched the soggy, dairy-drenched Spamton plushie from the desk and whipped it across the room like a baseball, throwing it directly at Gordon!
SPLAT!
The heavy, milk-soaked plushie hit Gordon Freeman right in the chest of his high-tech HEV suit, leaving a giant, wet white smudge before sliding down to the floor.
The entire room gasped. Wayne covered his eyes, Baaulp took a step back, and BIGSHOTGAMIG1997 yelled, "Not the milky Spamton!"

Gordon slowly looked down at his ruined armor, then looked back up at Kyle. He didn't speak, but he slowly raised his iron crowbar, giving it a menacing little tap against his palm.

PART 13: THE LORE QUESTION

DadMoo took a slow sip of his coffee, looking at Gordon Freeman, who was currently staring down Kyle the Alien for throwing a dairy-soaked toy at his chest armor. DadMoo shook his head, remembering his own late nights playing the original game back in 1998. [1]

BIGSHOTGAMIG1997 looked away from the standoff and turned his head toward TreeMoo's dad.

"Why does he never talk in the game? is there a backstory to why?" BIGSHOTGAMIG1997 asked, genuinely curious about the old-school gaming lore.

DadMoo chuckled, setting his mug down on the desk next to the PS2. "Well, back when the game came out, the creators at Valve made him a silent protagonist on purpose. They wanted *you* to completely become Gordon. If he talked, it might break your immersion while playing!" [1, 2, 3, 4]

"So he can talk, he just chooses not to?" Levi asked, adjusting his non-flammable winter coat.

"Exactly," DadMoo replied. "In the lore, he's just an incredibly quiet, hyper-focused guy who lets his actions do the talking. Though looking at him now, I think he's just speechless because someone just chucked a soggy *Deltarune* plush at his hazard suit!"

Gordon Freeman slowly looked back down at the milk spot on his chest, then sighed—a silent, heavy sigh—before gesturing with his crowbar toward the split-screen TV, as if telling TreeMoo and BIGSHOTGAMIG1997 to stop talking

and get back to the co-op level.

PART 14: THE WINDOW THREAT

Levi threw his hands in the air, his patience completely running out. He pointed dramatically at the open bedroom window where the cool winter breeze was blowing in.

"IF GORDON FREEMAN WON'T TALK, I'LL THROW HIM OUT THE WINDOW!" Levi shouted, rolling up his sleeves and preparing to charge at the heavy, armor-clad scientist.

DadMoo's eyes went wide with panic. He dropped his coffee mug onto the desk and rushed forward to block Levi.

"NO! DON'T DO THAT!" DadMoo yelled, holding his arms out. "Levi, he is wearing a high-tech HEV hazard suit made of high-density polymers! He weighs like three hundred pounds! You'll break your back, and you'll probably break my window!"

Gordon Freeman stood completely still, watching the drama unfold. He slowly raised his crowbar and tapped it against the window frame, as if politely reminding Levi that he wasn't going anywhere without a fight.

TreeMoo and BIGSHOTGAMIG1997 looked up from their PS2 controllers, completely stunned by how chaotic their Christmas morning had become.

PART 15: THE IMPOSSIBLE LAUNCH

Despite DadMoo's frantic warnings, Levi wasn't backing down. Fueled by pure chaotic energy, he charged across the bedroom, grabbed the edges of Gordon Freeman's heavy HEV suit, and gave a massive, roaring heave.

Against all laws of physics, Levi actually lifted the three-hundred-pound theoretical physicist and shoved him right out the open bedroom window!

A loud *CRASH* echoed from the bushes outside, followed by

absolute silence.
DadMoo buried his face in his hands, completely speechless. Kyle the Alien cheered, while BIGSHOTGAMIG1997 stared out the window in disbelief.
Suddenly, a metallic clanging sound came from the garden. Everyone peered over the windowsill. Gordon Freeman was standing up, brushing dirt and leaves off his milk-stained armor. His glasses were slightly crooked, and even without voice lines, it was crystal clear that **Gordon Freeman was very mad.**
Instead of storming back inside with his crowbar, Gordon reached into a hidden compartment on his suit, pulled out a high-tech Black Mesa walkie-talkie, and began aggressively tapping in a code. He was calling in backup. He was going to call his friends.
Levi poked his head completely out the open window, looking down at the grumbling scientist standing in the bushes. He crossed his arms over his heavy winter coat, feeling totally victorious.
"THAT'S WHAT HE GETS FOR NOT TALKING!" Levi shouted down into the yard, completely unapologetic about breaking the laws of gravity to throw a video game legend outside.
TreeMoo sighed heavily, staring at the open window and then over at her glitching computer screen. She rested her chin in her hands, completely exasperated by the pure escalating chaos in her room.
"THIS IS MORE ANNOYING THAN ASGORE RUNS OVER DESS!" TreeMoo complained loudly.
BIGSHOTGAMIG1997 winced at the mere mention of the king. Everyone in the room knew the real-life story: a few

weeks ago, TreeMoo had innocently suggested the Asgore Runs Over Dess track to her school teacher. Her teacher had listened to the intense rhythm, immediately declared the song way too violent, and shut it down. Ever since that faithful school day, TreeMoo had officially decided to start hating Asgore out of pure spite.

"Hey, don't look at me," DadMoo said, raising his hands in defense. "I didn't ban the track! But right now, we have bigger problems than underground monster kings."

DadMoo pointed out the window. Down on the lawn, the white milk spot on Gordon Freeman’s suit was glowing a bright, alarming green. His Black Mesa walkie-talkie hummed to life, emitting a static-heavy tone that shook the entire house. The backup was arriving.